

AN ALCOHOL-SAFE AND DRUG-FREE

HOLIDAY

SEASON

TO REMEMBER

Media Toolkit — 2001



**SAMHSA**  
Substance Abuse and Mental  
Health Services Administration

**CSAP** Center for  
Substance Abuse  
Prevention



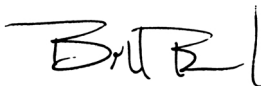
November 2001

Dear Colleague:

To assist you in your efforts to prevent substance abuse during the holiday season, the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI), a service of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is providing you with the 2001 Alcohol-Safe and Drug-Free Holiday Season to Remember Media Toolkit, a step-by-step guide to help you and your organization work with local radio stations and newspapers to raise community awareness and prevent alcohol- and drug-related problems during the 2001 holiday season.

We think you will find this year's holiday Media Toolkit useful in helping to ensure that every family in your community has a safe and joyful holiday season to remember. Feel free to contact me at 1-800-729-6686, ext. 260 if you need any further technical assistance.

Sincerely,



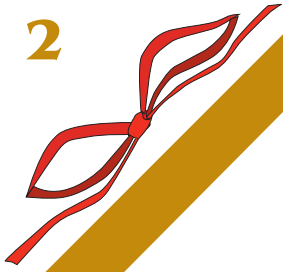
Bill Beard

Director of Media Relations  
SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse  
for Alcohol and Drug Information

## Media Toolkit for Alcohol-Safe and Drug-Free Holiday Celebrations

- **What:** This easy-to-use Toolkit will help you take advantage of local media opportunities to raise public awareness about alcohol-safe and drug-free holiday celebrations.
- **When:** These materials can be used during the year-end holiday season, but also can be adapted for other observances and holiday events throughout the year.
- **Where:** The Toolkit will help gauge the most appropriate media placements for your holiday messages.
- **Who:** Your organization's spokesperson can use these materials to prepare for print/broadcast interviews and other media opportunities.
- **How:** Simply follow the steps outlined in this Toolkit.

*Please take a moment to let us know what works and what does not work for you by completing and returning the enclosed Reply Form at the back of the Toolkit.*



# Media Toolkit for an Alcohol-Safe and Drug-Free Holiday Season to Remember 2001

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## Talking Points for Safe Holiday Entertaining

A well-crafted series of talking points can help your organization's media spokesperson communicate your alcohol-safe and drug-free messages more effectively during interviews with radio or print media. Enclosed in this Toolkit are a number of talking points for your consideration. You may want to add others that reflect specific activities or initiatives of your organization. Consider sharing your talking points with the media in advance to help focus the interview on matters of importance to you and your organization. While each talking point may have many facets, be careful to focus on no more than three primary messages. This ensures that your audience will "take home" what they have been told.

Here are three core areas, with corresponding talking points, to get you started:

### 1. Hosting Alcohol-Safe and Drug-Free Holiday Parties

- Avoid making alcohol the main focus of the social event. Entertain guests with music, dancing, games, food, and lively conversation.
- Do not force non-drinkers to share the cost of alcoholic beverages. For example, if you are hosting a corporate event, separate the price of admission or food from the cost of the drinks.
- One out of three adults prefers a non-alcoholic beverage. Ensure that the choice is available at any holiday party. Offer alternatives such as sparkling water, fancy juice drinks, and soft drinks. Provide nutritious and appealing food to slow the effects of alcohol.
- Require bartenders to measure the correct amount of liquor in drinks (no doubles) and instruct them to refuse service to minors or anyone who appears to be impaired.
- Stop serving drinks at least 1 hour before the end of an event. Serve non-alcoholic beverages and desserts at that time.

### 2. Impaired Driving

- Provide drinkers with alternatives to driving. Offer your place to spend the night, call a taxi, or ask someone who was not drinking to drive your friend home.
- Despite your best efforts, some guest may find a way to overindulge. Have the phone numbers of several cab companies available, and know about any "safe ride" programs in your area.

- Be prepared. Don't let someone who has been drinking or using drugs drive. If the person insists, take the keys, ask for help from other guests, or temporarily disable the car. If necessary, say you will call the police (and do so) if all else fails. Seven million people drove under the influence of an illicit drug at some time in the past year. Most of those same people also drove while under the influence of alcohol.
- About 3 in 10 Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some time in their lives.
- In 1999, nearly 16,000 people were killed and more than 300,000 were injured as a result of alcohol-related crashes.

### 3. Facts and Figures

- More than half of Americans have not had a drink within the last 30 days.
- All States now have 21-year-old minimum drinking age laws. Make sure you don't serve alcohol to anyone underage!
- Ecstasy has become the party drug of choice for many young people, but it's not the benign drug that people think it is. Research shows that Ecstasy is both dangerous and addictive.
- An estimated 6.4 million persons have tried Ecstasy at least once in their lifetime. Know the signs of Ecstasy use: loss of coordination, dizziness, fainting, depression, confusion, sleep problems, chills or sweating, and slurred speech.

# Fact Sheet

## Substance Abuse and Impaired Driving

### Substance Abuse Statistics:

1. Almost half (46.6 percent) of Americans aged 12 and older reported being current drinkers of alcohol in 2000 (SAMHSA, 2000 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse).
2. Use of the party/club drug known as Ecstasy increased from 0.9 percent to 2.4 percent among college students from 1991 through 1998 (National Institute on Drug Abuse, Facts About MDMA, 2000).
3. An estimated 6.4 million persons have tried Ecstasy at least once in their lifetime (SAMHSA, 2000 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse).

### Impaired Driving Data:

1. At least 50 percent of all holiday traffic fatalities involve alcohol (Mothers Against Drunk Driving).
2. While the number of alcohol-related fatalities during holiday periods is at an all-time low (down 34 percent since 1995), impaired driving is still a leading cause of death for people under the age of 30 (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration).
3. Twenty-eight percent (46.5 million) reported driving within 2 hours after drug or alcohol use (SAMHSA, 1998 Driving After Alcohol or Drug Use).
4. In 1999, nearly 16,000 people were killed and more than 300,000 were injured as a result of alcohol-related crashes (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration).
5. An estimated 7 million people drove under the influence of an illicit drug at some time in the past year. Of these, most (77 percent) had also driven under the influence of alcohol (SAMHSA, 2000 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse).
6. About 3 in 10 Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some time in their lives (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration).
7. One in 10 Americans (22.3 million people) drove under the influence of alcohol at least once in the past 12 months. Between 1999 and 2000, the rate of driving under the influence of alcohol declined from 10.9 percent to 10.0 percent. Among young adults aged 18 to 25 years, 19.9 percent drove under the influence of alcohol in 2000 (SAMHSA, 2000 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse).

### Did you know?

- Holidays are especially dangerous because more people celebrate by over-drinking, making themselves susceptible to alcohol-related troubles.
- Impaired driving can occur with very low blood alcohol percentages. For most people, even one drink can affect driving skills.
- Coffee cannot sober up someone who has had too much to drink. Only time can do that. It takes 1 hour to metabolize one drink.

## Feature Story Ideas for Radio and Newspapers

Approach your local media representatives with the radio programming and newspaper feature story ideas below. Write or call local radio public affairs directors or newspaper editors with a pitch (see sample pitch letter) and follow up as appropriate. You can include the Alcohol Abuse Fact Sheet and Drop-in Article in your package. Don't forget to suggest they interview an expert spokesperson from your organization.

**Blood alcohol concentration (BAC) is the percent of alcohol in the bloodstream. Most States are moving to .08 BAC for Driving While Under the Influence (DWI) convictions.**

### Story Idea — Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC): What is it, and Why Should We Be Concerned With it During the Holidays?

Call your local radio station to propose a public affairs program on BAC. Propose they invite someone from your organization, a member of the local police department, and a representative from the academic community who can talk about this issue. Pitch the idea that the show can offer listeners advice on ways to prevent injuries and death caused by impaired driving during the holiday season.

### Story Idea — How to Have an Alcohol Safe Holiday Season: A Consumer Guide to Safe Holiday Alcohol Consumption.

Alcohol seems to be everywhere during the holiday season. Office parties, special holiday events, and traditional New Year's Eve celebrations focus our

**Avoid making alcohol the main focus of the social event. Entertain guests with music, dancing, games, food, and lively conversation.**

**An average of one alcohol-related fatality occurs every 33 minutes (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration).**

attention on alcohol more frequently than at any other 4-week period during the year. Pitch the idea of a public affairs radio program or a feature story advising individuals to monitor and control their alcohol intake to ensure they won't become an alcohol-related holiday statistic.

## Story Idea — The Art of Being a Responsible Host: Tips on Planning an Alcohol-Safe and Drug-Free Holiday Party.

All too often alcohol is a primary focus of holiday celebrations. Not surprisingly, the percentage of drunk driving crashes typically increases during the holidays. However, communities, families, offices, and students across the country are challenging this norm. Radio programs and newspaper articles can help emphasize that alcohol does not have to be the main attraction at holiday parties, and there are ways to organize fun, yet safe, holiday gatherings. Ironically, such media coverage is even more compelling after high profile alcohol-related tragedies.

**One out of three adults prefers a non-alcoholic beverage. Offer alternatives such as sparkling water, fancy juice drinks, and soft drinks.**

**First Night is an alcohol-free community celebration of the New Year with art, ritual, and festivity.**

## Story Idea — Alcohol-Safe and Drug-Free Holiday Events in Our Community.

Finding a local angle to your story can help attract the interest of media. You should have little trouble organizing or identifying alcohol-safe and drug-free holiday events where you live. For example, more than 200 communities across the country will be hosting their own versions of an alcohol-free event called First Night. Held on New Year's Eve, this is an alcohol-free, community celebration of the New Year with art, ritual, and festivity. Let stations and newspapers know that many of their listeners and readers prefer alcohol-safe and drug-free celebrations, and organize representatives from these activities to be interviewed about such events.

## Story Idea — Are Ecstasy and Other Club Drugs All the Rave for Your Teen This Holiday Season?

The term "club drug" refers to a wide variety of dangerous psychoactive substances often used at all-night dance parties (called "raves"), nightclubs, and concerts. But many parents are unaware that their teenagers and young adult children use such drugs. Encourage media outlets in your community to investigate the local party scene for club drug distribution to caution parents about the signs and symptoms of club drug impairment.

**Signs of Ecstasy Use: Problems remembering things recently said or done, loss of coordination, dizziness, fainting, depression, confusion, sleep problems, chills or sweating, and slurred speech.**

## Drop-in Article

This is a ready-to-go article to be printed in your community's publications, including local newspapers. While some dailies will be reluctant to use this, many weekly newspapers are open to using such articles and often do so to fill space. You can also give the drop-in article to your organization's director of communications to be used internally, such as in organization newsletters. Feel free to substitute your organization's name and number at the end of this article.

### Celebrating the Holidays Tips for Organizing Alcohol-Safe and Drug-Free Parties

Alcohol is often a big part of holiday celebrations. In fact, the percentage of alcohol- and drug-related driving crashes typically increases during this time of the year. However, communities, families, offices and students across the country are challenging this norm. Many people are coming to the realization that alcohol should not be the main attraction at holiday parties, and there are ways to organize fun, yet safe, festivities that will prevent family and friends from becoming the next alcohol- or drug-related statistic.

According to experts on responsible hosting, simple precautionary steps can help ensure your guests' safety both during and after the celebration. Here are some recommendations for alcohol-safe and drug-free events:

#### Get the Party Started

- Encourage lively conversation and group activities, such as games that keep the focus on fun — not alcohol.
- Prepare plenty of foods so guests will not drink on an empty stomach, and avoid too many salty foods which tend to make people thirsty.
- Never serve alcohol to someone under the legal drinking age, and never ask children to serve alcohol.
- Make it clear that no drug use will be tolerated.

#### If You Choose to Serve Alcohol

- Offer a variety of non-alcoholic beverages for those who prefer not to drink alcohol. You could even host a contest to create non-alcoholic drink recipes.
- If you prepare an alcoholic punch, use a non-carbonated base, like fruit juice. Alcohol is absorbed into the bloodstream faster with a carbonated base.

- Don't let guests mix their own drinks. Choose a reliable bartender who abstains from alcohol at the party and who can keep track of the size and number of drinks that guests consume.

#### Before Your Guests Depart

- Stop serving alcohol 1.5 hours before the party ends because only time sobers an individual who has been drinking.
- If some guests have too much to drink, drive them home or arrange for alternate transportation.

For more information on organizing alcohol-safe and drug-free parties, contact SAMHSA's **National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information at 1-800-729-6686.**

#### Facts To Remember

More than half of Americans are not current drinkers.

Impaired driving can occur with very low blood alcohol percentages. For most people, even 1 drink can affect driving skills.

Twenty-eight percent (46.5 million) reported driving within 2 hours after drug or alcohol use (SAMHSA, 1999 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse).

At least 50 percent of all holiday traffic fatalities involve alcohol (Mothers Against Drunk Driving).

Holidays are especially dangerous because more people celebrate by over-drinking, making themselves susceptible to alcohol-related troubles.

Coffee cannot sober up someone who has had too much to drink. Only time can do that. It takes 1 hour to metabolize one drink.

Give your guests the gift of a  
holiday season to remember by  
making this season's events  
alcohol-safe and drug-free.



The 2001 Party Planning Tips for a Holiday Season to Remember brochure will show you how. To request a free copy, contact SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information at 1-800-729-6686 or [www.health.org](http://www.health.org).



**SAMHSA**  
Substance Abuse and Mental  
Health Services Administration

**CSAP** Center for  
Substance Abuse  
Prevention





## Radio Public Service Announcements

Public service announcements (PSAs) are generally run as a pro bono community service on radio stations. These free commercials can be 10, 15, 30, or 60 seconds long. Because of competition for the limited time allocated for public service announcements, the shorter ones are more likely to be aired. Use the following PSA scripts below "as is," or tailor them to your organization's unique point of view. Be sure to insert your organization's telephone number and "tag," (for example, "A service of the Carolina Council on Alcoholism"). If your organization is not prepared to receive the large number of calls resulting from mass media exposure, please feel free to use the NCADI toll-free number, **1-800-729-6686**.

### :30

Be a responsible host this holiday season. If you offer your adult guests alcoholic beverages, also serve lots of alcohol-free alternatives. When you avoid making alcohol the focus of your holiday celebration, you'll be doing your part to make this a safe and enjoyable holiday season for everyone. Call **(insert your organization's phone number here)** for more information on how to plan an alcohol-safe and drug-free holiday party. That's **(insert your organization's phone number here)**.

Tag: A message from the **(insert your organization's name here)** and this station.

### :20

Planning a holiday party? If your answer is "yes," don't forget to provide lots of alcohol-free drink choices. You'll be doing your part to make this a safe and enjoyable holiday season for everyone. Call **(insert your organization's phone number here)** for more information. That's **(insert your organization's phone number here)**.

Tag: A message from the **(insert your organization's name here)** and this station.

### :15

Have you made alcohol-safe and drug-free entertaining one of your family's holiday traditions? If not, a free booklet will show you how. Call **(insert your organization's phone number here)** today. That's **(insert your organization's phone number here)**.

Tag: A message from the **(insert your organization's name here)** and this station.

## Additional Suggestions:

When sending PSAs to radio stations, make sure you include the name and telephone number of your organization's contact person. Also, provide the station with a cut-off point (a.k.a., Kill Date) when they should stop running the spots. **Suggested Kill Date: January 2, 2002**



## **SAMHSA Media Resources**

### **SAMHSA Media Services Line**

1-800-487-4890

SAMHSA understands editorial deadlines. A toll-free number (1-800-487-4890) has been established for media representatives to get accurate information in a timely fashion. We can also coordinate interviews with expert spokespersons on all matters related to substance abuse prevention and treatment.

### **SAMHSA Radio Newsline**

1-800-272-7723

The SAMHSA Radio Newsline provides broadcast-ready substance abuse news and public affairs reports. The audio spots feature actualities from nationally recognized experts in the fields of substance abuse prevention and treatment. Broadcast-ready Newsline reports (usually 60 to 90 seconds) can easily be folded into radio news or public affairs programming, or they can serve as a source of quotes and actualities for your own news coverage.

### **SAMHSA Media Services Web Sites**

[www.samhsa.gov/news/news.html](http://www.samhsa.gov/news/news.html)

The SAMHSA Newsroom provides SAMHSA's latest news releases, statistics, fact sheets, data, and policy reports on mental health, substance abuse prevention and treatment, managed care, and the workplace. The Web site also provides links to other SAMHSA resources.

[www.health.org/media](http://www.health.org/media)

The NCADI Newsroom is the most comprehensive online resource for journalists covering issues related to substance abuse. Be sure to check out the new and improved Newsroom with news angles, programming ideas, and other resources specifically created for the media. The NCADI Newsroom also offers press releases, links to online substance abuse-related articles (updated daily), public education information, PSA scripts, and much more.



## Sample Media Pitch Letter

[DATE]

[NAME]

[TITLE]

[MEDIA OUTLET]

[ADDRESS]

Dear [NAME]:

The holiday season, while filled with joyous celebrations, may also be a time for overindulgence in alcohol and other substances. Unfortunately, excessive alcohol and consumption can lead to an array of serious consequences such as fatalities, injuries sustained in car crashes, and ruined family celebrations.

[ORGANIZATION] is providing you with the enclosed resources to help you promote alcohol-safe and drug-free holiday celebrations. These materials can help to ensure that your audience will have a memorable, joyful, and healthy holiday season.

Here are a few suggestions:

1. **[For Print Media Only]:** Publish the attached drop-in article to promote alcohol-safe holiday events in your community.
2. Use the holiday fact sheet and feature story ideas provided to support holiday-related news and public affairs coverage.
3. Run the enclosed PSAs throughout the holiday season to provide the public with tips on hosting safe holiday events.
4. Contact us for expert spokespeople to interview for stories that address local strategies for impaired driving prevention and community efforts to encourage alcohol-safe and drug-free celebrations.
5. Encourage your readers to call **1-800-729-6686** for a free copy of the **2001 Party Planning Tips for a Holiday Season to Remember**.

We hope you will find these resources useful in taking steps to ensure that every family in your community has a memorable, joyful, and safe holiday season.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Title]

## 2001 Holiday Toolkit Reply Form

Dear Colleague:

Did you use...

1. Talking Points? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Fact Sheet? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Feature Story Ideas? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Drop-in Article? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Public Service Announcements (PSAs)? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How many times did the PSAs run? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Please rate the quality of the Toolkit content:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please complete the following information below:

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Address 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Address 2: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to be put on our mailing list to receive future  
PSAs/reports and press releases? \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to NCADI, ATTN: Media Relations at:  
Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 2345  
Rockville, MD 20847-2345  
or Fax Number: 301-468-6433